

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



FOUNDED 1917



Rue Mapp

Field trip at the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline.

Making Connections: Outdoor Afro and GGAS

Working at Golden Gate Audubon Society back in 2009 was a gift. While I always considered myself passionate about nature, the activity of birding never came into focus even while I was growing up here in the abundant bird and wildlife habitat of the Bay Area. In my role as GGAS development associate, I was meaningfully engaged with the members and mission of GGAS, so it was not long before I fell into an awareness and enthusiasm for birds that expanded my appreciation for the natural environment and helped empower me to share it with others.

Around the same time I began working for GGAS, I also started a social media effort called Outdoor Afro (OA) that was designed to help reconnect African Americans with nature and the outdoors. At first, OA was a way for me to share my personal experiences in nature and history and to help model for others what might be possible. But quickly, Outdoor Afro became a national online conversation, with black people from all over the United States signing on and saying, in a variety of ways, "me too!" Since then, the Outdoor Afro network and conversation have continued to expand with thousands of images, blogs, and posts that celebrate and inspire African American connections to nature. It has also been gratifying to partner with many local and national outdoor recreation and conservation organizations, including Golden Gate

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Join Us for the Christmas Count

It's time to mark your calendar, enlist your birding friends, and sign up for Golden Gate Audubon's 2012 Christmas Bird Counts. Oakland on Sunday, December 16, and San Francisco on Thursday, December 27. You'll have an enjoyable day of birding that you can top off with a delicious dinner. At dinner you'll have the chance to hear what birds others have found, including rarities you might want to seek. The counts are popular: San Francisco usually attracts more than 90 field observers, and Oakland usually tops 150.

Invitations to both counts have been e-mailed to everyone who participated recently in either count and provided an e-mail address. Oakland co-compiler Bob Lewis urges prompt replies. "It really helps the compilers ensure that every area is covered well," says Bob, "and if you can sign up online, it makes our job easier. If you've participated recently but don't have Internet access, we'll snail-mail forms to you. And if you're new to the count, you can request sign-up forms from the GGAS office. Note that we welcome all birders, no matter what their experience level."

This season marks the 113th year of Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Each count attempts to identify and tally the birds within a 15-mile-diameter count circle during one calendar day. Last year, thousands of volunteers counted roughly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. The National Audubon Society has

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Jack Dumbacher
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Michael Lozeau
Sarah Peterman
Al Peters
Jay Pierrepont
Phil Price
Diane Ross-Leech

Ilana DeBare 510.301.5573
idebare@goldengateaudubon.org

Mike Lynes 510.843.6551
mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org

Lisa Owens Viani 510.843.7295
lowensvi@goldengateaudubon.org

Marissa Ortega-Welch 510.843.2222
mortegawelch@goldengateaudubon.org

Anthony DeCicco 510.843.2222
adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org

Mark Welther 510.843.9912
mwelther@goldengateaudubon.org

John Trubina 510.843.2222

Noreen Weeden 510.301.0570
volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org

Judith Dunham judithdnhm@yahoo.com

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

Ilana DeBare 510.301.5573
idebare@goldengateaudubon.org

415.681.7422

The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702
TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

For Nature Store hours, please call or check the website.

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Adapting to a Challenging Environment

This issue of the *Gull* includes our 2011–2012 Annual Report, which highlights many of our achievements—from implementation of Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings, to expansion of our award-winning Eco-Education program into San Francisco, to the launch of our new Golden Gate Birder blog.

But I don't want to talk about achievements, pleasant as that may be.

I want to talk about challenges.

Like many nonprofits, Golden Gate Audubon continues to feel the results of the recession even as private sector businesses have started to revive. In the past, we relied on grants for about half our operating budget. But foundation grants have become much more competitive in the past few years, and government grants for our kind of work have virtually disappeared.

The result, as the annual report shows, is that Golden Gate Audubon ended the year with an operating deficit of about \$100,000.

Our reaction to this unsustainable situation has been to cut expenses as much as possible, while turning to individual members and donors—yes, *you*—for a bigger share of our support.

An equally important key to our sustainability will be outreach to new members. It's neither fair nor wise to ask existing members to shoulder the entire future of Golden Gate Audubon. If we are going to thrive in our second century, we need to engage those who have never been members before—especially young people.

For this reason, Golden Gate Audubon is reaching out to new members and young people by shifting to more electronic communications in 2013. At the same time, we will make changes to improve the paper *Gull*, which we know many of you prefer. The revised *Gull* will have a quarterly format that allows more in-depth content and full-color photos, while saving paper and money. (Thank you to the 300-plus members who responded to our May communications survey: your input is guiding our decisions as we make these necessary changes.)

Meanwhile, we look forward to offering some exciting new programs in 2013: our first-ever master birder classes, bird clubs for “hotshot” teen birders, more family birdwalks, our fourth annual Birdathon, website upgrades with more birding resources, and a new collaboration with Outdoor Afro (see page 1). And of course, we hope to see conservation victories at Alameda Point and Altamont Pass.

To achieve all this, we have an ambitious goal of raising \$400,000 from all sources by the end of 2012. Here's how you can help.

- Renew your membership for 2013 today.
- Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution in addition to your membership fee. Your generosity is key to maintaining GGAS's vibrant programming and advocacy.
- Help us bring in new members by inviting your family and friends to a birdwalk or talk (see pages 5–8) and telling them about why you love birds.
- Purchase one of our beautiful new GGAS 2013 calendars—and maybe a few more for friends (see page 5).
- Elect to receive the *Gull* and other GGAS communications electronically by e-mailing ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Every dollar saved in postage and printing is a dollar we can redirect into environmental education and advocacy.

I am confident that with your support, we will not only meet but *fly* past our goal. Have a wonderful holiday season. I look forward to seeing you at one of our Christmas Bird Counts and at many environmental events in 2013.

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Mark Welther

—Mark Welther, Executive Director

NOV 28 2012

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Bay Area Hotspot: El Polín Spring

This is the first in an occasional series focusing on birding locations. If you missed David's piece when it first appeared on the GGAS blog, you will want to sign up to receive future posts (www.goldengateaudubon.org/blog), sent twice per week. Have a favorite site you'd like to share? Contact idebare@goldengateaudubon.org.

My first impression of Upper Tennessee Hollow was of an unfinished project. The plant growth seemed low, much of it very fresh, stakes still marking plant lines. Then, as I walked farther along El Polín Spring, the centerpiece and focal point, I heard the distinct *meWEEdeer* call of an Olive-sided Flycatcher, followed by a Red-tailed Hawk's shrill cry, a cacophony of finch calls, Violet-green Swallows overhead, and an Ash-throated Flycatcher perched on the west slope. Oh boy, this was a place for the birds.

Situated at the southern end of MacArthur Avenue in San Francisco's Presidio, El Polín Spring and the Upper Tennessee Hollow have recently been restored (www.presidio.gov/explore). It turns out that half the growth is quite mature, and the flanking Monterey pine and redwood groves are long settled. The year-round spring and the varied habitat make the area a bird magnet. The archaeological excavations (from a Spanish/Mexican settlement in the early 1800s) and ample graphics complement

nicely as added points of interest.

The Presidio Trust went to great lengths to capture the spring as a feature, creating slightly sunken spillways across the path—which the birds use continually for bathing—and forming a series of small ponds with weirs that flow into one another through wetlands. A Great Blue Heron has adopted the uppermost pond, sharing it with a Snowy Egret. California Towhees, Black Phoebe, American Robins, White-crowned and Song Sparrows, Bush tits, and hummingbirds (Anna's and Allen's) were in abundance on the day I visited. Fledgling House Finches lined up in the sun, two Lesser Goldfinch youngsters came to the spring, and a Hairy Woodpecker brought three small, fluffy young to a small oak right by the trail. I had to say "awww!"

The upper bowl is partial grasslands, and the Lesser Goldfinches, American Goldfinches, and House Finches, as well as a pair of Lazuli Buntings, enjoyed the grasses and seeds. The woods and fringe attract Pygmy Nuthatches, flycatchers and woodpeckers, Western Bluebirds, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Hutton's Vireos, and more. Overhead I saw Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, an American Kestrel, Barn Swallows, Western Gulls, Common Ravens, a Double-crested Cormorant, and a Caspian Tern.

Winter trips to Upper Tennessee Hol-



Hairy Woodpecker at El Polín Spring.

low are sure to add warblers, more vireos, kinglets, and the odd vagrant. No matter what time of year, the Hollow and El Polín Spring are a great stop for birders.

— David Anderson

David Anderson is vice president of the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors and chair of the San Francisco Conservation Committee. For several years, he led Audubon of Florida and, prior to that, was director of the San Francisco Zoo.

Home Tweet Home

Golden Gate Audubon and RabbitEARS are partnering to raise funds for bird conservation and house rabbit rescue. Drop by the Kensington Farmer's Market, Oak View at the Colusa Circle in Kensington, on Sunday, November 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and support this joint fundraiser. We will be selling nest boxes for Western Bluebirds, Oak Titmice, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees; 2013 Golden Gate Audubon calendars; and RabbitEARS' new signature line of handmade dishes for small animals.

Proceeds will benefit Golden Gate Audubon's conservation and education efforts and RabbitEARS' rescue and medical expenses. For more information call Golden Gate Audubon, 510.843.7295, or RabbitEARS, 510.356.4233.

Volunteers are needed to staff the table at the market. If you can help, even for just an hour or so, contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden, 510.301.0570 or nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.



Ethan Weeden



YOSEMITE SLOUGH RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

Golden Gate Audubon is teaming up with Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) to enhance habitat at Yosemite Slough on San Francisco's southern waterfront. Funded by a Together Green grant, the project continues through June 2013. Come out and help plant natives propagated at the LEJ nursery and at the same time get to see the birds that rely on this tidal marsh and wetland. Volunteers should meet at the LEJ nursery at the Candlestick State Recreation Area, 1150 Carroll Avenue, and will ride in a van to the site. The next restoration days are Saturday, November 24, and December 22, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

TRAINING DAY FOR BAY TRAIL DOCENTS

From November through March, Golden

Gate Audubon volunteers set up spotting scopes along the San Francisco Bay Trail in Albany and Richmond and show the migratory and wintering shorebirds to walkers, cyclists, and other trail users. We invite you to become a docent in this successful and enjoyable program. Training for new volunteers will be held Thursday, November 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at our Berkeley office. We provide all the information you need to share with the public, and newcomers are paired in the field with experienced docents. To sign up, contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden at nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.

RESTORATION CALENDAR

Join us for monthly workdays at sites where volunteers help restore bird habitat. Not only do you get to meet like-minded volunteers, but you have an opportunity to see and learn

about local birds. Site details and directions: www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

Lands End, San Francisco—Saturday, November 3, 1–4 p.m., with the Parks Conservancy

Crissy Wildlife Protection Area, San Francisco—Monday, November 12 and December 10, 10 a.m.–noon

Milk Pt. Regional Shoreline, Oakland—Saturday, November 17 and December 15, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Golden Gate Park Bison Paddock, San Francisco—Saturday, November 17 and December 15, from 9 a.m.–noon, with SF Recreation and Parks Department

Alameda Wildlife Refuge—Sunday, November 11 and December 9, 9 a.m.–noon

Pier 94, San Francisco—Saturday, December 1, 9 a.m.–noon

MAKING CONNECTIONS from page 1

Audubon, which have become passionate allies and supporters of OA's work.

After departing GGAS, I continued to bird and occasionally lead trips, yet I was disappointed that there were not more people who looked like me participating in the activity. And I found it ironic that there were large communities of color, many of whom live in very close proximity to National Audubon Society Important Bird Areas, such as the North Richmond Wetlands or Oakland's Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline, who were not exploring and enjoying the accessible spaces so commonly beloved by the birding community. As bird enthusiasts, we all know it's not just about the birds; it's about peace and a greater sense of connection and care for the natural environment. I personally find birds are a perfect metaphor for freedom to soar without boundaries, a sense of hope and possibility, which is especially needed in stressed communities.

This is why I was grateful for an opportunity to make a meaningful connection between the local Outdoor Afro community and Golden Gate Audubon, with the

support from a Toyota Audubon Together Green Innovation Grant for a Bay Area-based Outdoor Afro Leadership Team. Under the guidance of staff and volunteers from both organizations, this four-member team is leading one outdoor trip per quarter. Team members are given the tools they need to blog and share stories and photos from each trip through a variety of social media channels, while also receiving mentoring. With the help of GGAS volunteers, we have begun identifying specific Bay Area habitats with high conservation value in order to protect and support sustainable recreational fun in the context of environmental education and awareness.

Recent trips—including hikes at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline and Redwood Regional Park, as well as a kayaking and fishing trip at San Pablo Reservoir—have attracted more than a hundred participants. Special thanks to Elizabeth Sojourner, Sheila Dickie, and Bob Lewis for volunteering to help participants spot birds in their diverse habitats.

Ultimately, our goal is to develop a model of engagement that shifts cultural thinking and activities toward more meaningful



Rue Mapp at Mt. Lemmon, Arizona.

Sharon Stiteler, The Bird Chick

nature engagement for diverse audiences. At the same time, we aim to make organizations like GGAS, which support linkages between conservation and quality of life for all living species, more visible and relevant. We are so grateful and excited for this opportunity!

—Rue Mapp

Rue Mapp is founder and CEO of Outdoor Afro (www.outdoorafro.com). This fall, she was named to *The Root* 100, a list of black achievers and influencers.



The Feathery Tribe

Daniel Lewis

San Francisco: Thursday, November 15—7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Bird-watchers owe a hidden debt to history: the scientific study of birds took a specific route in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that dictated how birds were understood and enjoyed. For example, the ways that both common and scientific names were standardized caused a great deal of passionate argument. After Charles Darwin's work, everything changed, affecting our understanding of birds. Daniel Lewis will cover these developments in his discussion of *The Feathery Tribe* (Yale University Press), his biography of Robert Ridgway, the Smithsonian's first curator of birds. His new book traces key changes in ornithology leading to the present—and what it meant to be a natural scientist at the dawn of the 20th century.

Dan is Dibner senior curator of the history of science and technology at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He is also an adjunct associate professor at the University of Southern California in the biology and history departments. As the Huntington's chief curator of manuscripts, he oversees a large department of 20 staff members and approximately seven linear miles of manuscripts. Dan's permanent exhibit at the Huntington, "Beautiful Science: Ideas That Changed the World," won the American Association of Museum's Grand Prize in 2009 as the best exhibition in the United States.

San Francisco Speaker Series: First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html, and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.

BE A SPEAKER SERIES GREETER

You don't want to miss Dan Lewis's presentation on November 15 and the stories behind his much-praised book, *The Feathery Tribe*. If you can come early, we need help welcoming attendees and signing them in. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden, nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org.

A Big Thank-You

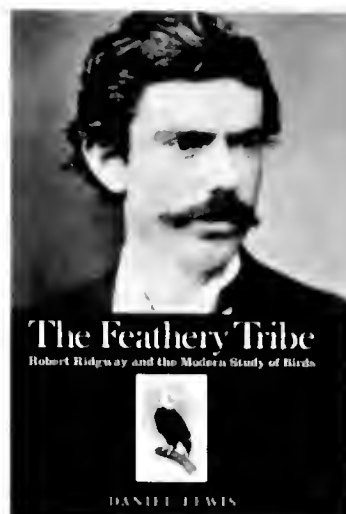
Every year, Golden Gate Audubon schedules nearly 150 field trips to destinations in the Bay Area and beyond. We couldn't do this without our dedicated and talented field trip leaders. We thank all the leaders who have volunteered in 2012, especially those who lead monthly and other regular trips. We also thank Steve Lombardi for coordinating the trips.

Jeremy Anderson
Chris Bard
Gary Bard
Eddie Bartley
Rich Cimino
Terry Colborn
Brian Fitch
Aaron Haiman
Charles Hibbard
Anne Hoff

Alan Hopkins
Tim Howe
Kathy Jarrett
Alan Kaplan
Carol Kiser
Michelle Labbe
Bob Lewis
Carol Lombardi
Steve Lombardi
Ginny Marshall

Helen McKenna
Dominik Mosur
Dan Murphy
Joan Murphy
Kitty O'Neil
Hilary Powers
Robin Pulich
Dave Quady
David Rice
Alan Ridley

Phila Rogers
Rusty Scalf
Kathryn Sechrist
Malcolm Sproul
Emilie Strauss
Glen Tepke
Ruth Tobey
Noreen Weeden
Martha Wessitsh
Denise Wight



Ring in the New Year

No need to look further for a 2013 calendar. Birds of the Bay Area is a must-have to display in your home or office—or to give away for the holidays. Jerry Ting's Black Oystercatcher graces the cover. Each month has an equally spectacular large image of a bird photographed in the Bay Area. Smaller photos are tucked into the calendar pages, which have reminders of GGAS events while allowing plenty of space for you to write in your own engagements. The calendar is priced at \$20, including tax. You can save the \$4 postage when you come the office to pick up a copy. You can also order through the main Donate page on our website. All proceeds support our programs. We thank the photographers for generously donating their work.



Take Flight on Friday Nights

On November 9 and 16, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Angela's Bistro in Alameda at 2301 Central Avenue will highlight Golden Gate Audubon in its Friday Flights wine-tasting event to benefit GGAS and the endangered California Least Terns at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. Angela's Friday Flights support local nonprofits by hosting a wine tasting where board members and volunteers from the nonprofits meet community members. Local wineries donate the wines. Each guest pays \$10 for two tastes. Additional tastes can be purchased for \$5 each.



Tilden Regional Park

Friday, November 2, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Alan Kaplan, 510.526.7609 (messages),
LNKPLN@earthlink.net

Meet at the parking lot for the Environmental Education Center for our regular first Friday birdwalk. The theme is plumages and molts: "Who you calling 'Definitive Basic'?" We'll walk on mostly flat trails; depending on the weather, some places could be muddy in spots. Heavy rain would be wonderful! Restrooms and water at start and midway.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sundays, November 4, December 2,
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Ginny Marshall, ginnybirder@sbcglobal.net; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com; Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241 (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet at the front gate of the garden in Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying birds. The garden charges \$7/person if you are not an SF resident or garden member. Bring identification for residency and membership status.

Berkeley Municipal Pier

Friday, November 9, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Alan Kaplan, 510.526.7609 (messages),
LNKPLN@earthlink.net

On this second Friday birdwalk, we'll look for loons, grebes, ducks, and gulls on or over the water, and sparrows on the land side. The pier is at the foot of University Ave. Restrooms and water available.

San Francisco Bay with Dolphin Charters

Saturday, November 10,
9:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Alan Ridley and Helen McKenna

Spaces may still be available on this trip to see the bay by boat. Trip leaves from Berkeley Marina and visits Alcatraz Island, the Marin Headlands, Angel Island, the Marin Islands, and the Brothers and Sisters Islands. Cost: \$85 for GGAS members, \$95 for nonmembers. Contact John Trubino, GGAS Office Manager, ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.2222. John will send directions to registered participants.

MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline

Oakland, Alameda County

Thursday, November 15, and
Wednesday, December 12, 9 – 11:30 a.m.
Gary and Chris Bard,
chrisbard@earthlink.net, 510.301.2987

The shoreline offers excellent views of shorebirds, waders, and dabblers. Arrowhead Marsh is the home of numerous Clapper Rails. In winter, large rafts of scaup and goldeneye float offshore. Occasionally, raptors soar overhead. Walking is on flat ground. Bring a scope if you have one. Dress in layers. Rain cancels. Meet at the parking lot at end of road. Restroom available near lot. Directions: www.ebparks.org/parks/martiniking.

Corona Heights

Fridays, November 16, December 21,
8 – 10 a.m.

Brian Fitch; Dominik Mosur, polskatata@yahoo.com (Leaders vary by month.)

Meet in front of the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at the end of Museum Way

off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Upper San Leandro Reservoir

Alameda County

Saturday, November 17, 7:30 a.m. – noon
Tim Howe, timgh88@yahoo.com

Meet at the Valle Vista staging area. We'll follow the main, generally flat trail through a great riparian area looking for Spotted Towhee, Acorn Woodpecker, and Bewick's Wren, among other species. Bring liquids. Restroom available in parking lot. Steady rain cancels.

The Valle Vista parking lot is 1 mile south of Moraga on Canyon Rd. Going south into Moraga on Moraga Way, make a right on Canyon Rd. Drive through a residential area for about .5 mile. In another .5 mile, turn left into the parking lot.

Aquatic Park and Waterfront

San Francisco

Sunday, November 18, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Carol Kiser, 415.447.5000

On this walk for children and beginners, and all others, we will look for resident and migrating birds. Meet at the entrance to the Hyde Street Pier at Hyde and Jefferson on the western border of Fisherman's Wharf. Nearby parking is at the foot of Van Ness Ave. (free for 4 hours), Ghirardelli Square, and the Anchorage.

San Joaquin National Wildlife Refuge

Stanislaus County

Saturday, November 24, 9 a.m.
Rusty Scalf; Steve Lombardi, 925.785.0130 (cell), hotrock175@gmail.com

We will start with a stroll on the newly opened Pelican Nature Trail through seasonal wetlands, restored riparian woodlands, and stands of old-growth valley oaks. This beautiful area could be very birdy, with many wintering sparrows and other birds. We'll reconvene a few miles away at the Beckwith Rd. viewing plat-

form to look at Aleutian Cackling Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and various waterfowl. This part of the refuge is the key wintering area for Aleutian Cacklers in the Central Valley. Information and directions: www.fws.gov/sanluis/sanjoaquin_info.htm. Carpooling is encouraged. Use the GGAS Yahoo Carpool Group if you need or can offer a ride (<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>).

Coyote Hills Regional Park

Wednesday, November 28, 8 – 11 a.m.

Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001, RLewis0727@aol.com; Kathryn Sechrist, hugwrangler@gmail.com

We'll look for wintering shorebirds, waterfowl, rails, and raptors as well as resident songbirds. Trails are level. Water and restrooms available. Torrential rain cancels. For directions, go to www.ebparks.org/parks/coyote_hills. Parking fee is \$5.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

**Wednesdays, November 28,
December 26, 9:30 a.m. – noon**

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthsobey@gmail.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero. This is the beginning of the peak season at Lake Merritt, and many species of diving ducks should be on their winter feeding grounds, including, if fortune favors us, some Barrow's Goldeneyes.

Take the 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into the park on Perkins. Best parking is at the boathouse lot near the spherical cage. Entry via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland, is \$2 if the kiosk is occupied when you arrive (which it probably will be). Buy a 2-hour ticket and try to park in the boathouse lot, where no one checks how long cars sit.

Emeryville to Richmond on the SF Bay Trail

Saturday, December 1

Michelle Labbe, 415.687.1179, labbemichelle@gmail.com;

Jeremy Andersen, 510.566.7211, jeremy.andersen@gmail.com

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Emeryville Marina at the turnaround at the end of Howell St. (there is parking) at Emeryville Marina Park. High tide is at about noon. We will bird most of the East Shore State Park on the SF Bay Trail and may include Aquatic Park in Berkeley. Return may be on BART. Bring bicycle lock, lunch, and liquids. Food and drink may be purchased at the Sit & Stay Cafe at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary, an e-mail or phone call is always appreciated.

Tilden Regional Park

Friday, December 7, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Kaplan, 510.526.7609 (messages), LNKPLN@earthlink.net

Meet at the parking lot for the Environmental Education Center for our regular first Friday birdwalk continuing the theme of plumages and molts. Trails may be muddy (we can only hope!). Restrooms and water at the start and midway.

Upper San Leandro Reservoir

Sunday, December 9, 9 a.m. – noon

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hotrock175@gmail.com, 925.785.0130 (cell)

Meet at the Valle Vista staging area. This EBMUD watershed features a nice variety of habitats: chaparral and scrub, grassland, pine-oak woodland, marsh, and open water, and an interesting assortment of residents and migrants, including raptors, thrasher, nuthatches, and waterfowl. Walking is mainly flat on unpaved trails. See November 17 field trip for directions.

Winter at the Salton Sea

Sunday, December 9, 9 a.m. – 3 or 4 p.m.

Eddie Bartley, 415.355.0450, eddie@naturetrip.com

Join Eddie and Noreen Weeden at one of California's premiere birding destinations for an exploration of the wonderfully eccentric Salton Sea. Winter birds expected include most all the waterbirds seen at other California refuges and

some southern specialties like Gambel's quail, vireos, Abert Towhees, and large flocks of vesper sparrow. Some of state's most abundant waterfowl populations include the area's winter waterfowl refuges, including the Salton Sea. Typically warmer than central and Northern California.

Get the latest news, information, and directions. Bring water, food, and a hat. It may be muddy, if it rains. We start at the Los Palmar Preserve near North Shore. www.chtranger.com/docs/palmar_preserve. From there, we'll head south, stopping at several places based on recent sightings, and we'll especially visit the Searby Bona NWR. If time permits, we may end our day at the excellent Unit 1. Contact Eddie for detailed directions.

Tilden Regional Park

Friday, December 14, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Kaplan, 510.526.7609 (messages), LNKPLN@earthlink.net

For our second Friday birdwalk, meet at Inspiration Point. We'll look for winter residents and locals (warblers, kinglets, sparrows, towhees). Mostly paved trail. Restrooms at start. Bring water. For a map, go to www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden.

MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline

Saturday, December 29

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

High tide (6.9 ft.) is at noon. Winter high tides are good times to see rails at the shoreline's Arrowhead Marsh and, if there has been enough rain, lots of ducks and shorebirds in the adjacent seasonal wetlands. Meet at Fruitvale BART at 10 a.m. or the Tidewater Staging Area at 10:20 a.m. We'll ride the SF Bay Trail from East Creek Point to Damon Slough and Arrowhead. Return is via Doolittle Dr. and Fernside Blvd. Bring snacks, lunch, and liquids. Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels. E-mail or call for cell number.

Car: Exit 880 at High St. in Oakland and go southwest to just before the High St. Bridge to Alameda. Cross bridge and turn left onto Tidewater Ave. and go 25 mi. to the Tidewater Staging Area on the right. If you get to Lesser St. you went a bit too far.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

Sacramento River Delta with Dolphin Charters

Saturday, February 16, 2013,
8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

GGAS leader to be announced

The comfortable Dolphin Charters boat departs from the Antioch Marina to explore the delta's rich habitats and see thousands of Tundra Swan, Snow Geese, White-fronted Geese, and Canada Geese, plus myriad ducks and overwintering and resident raptors. The trip is limited to 30 participants. Cost is \$85 for GGAS members, \$95 for nonmembers. To reserve your space on this trip and make payment, contact GGAS Office Manager John Trubina by Friday, January 18, by email at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or by phone at 510.843.2222. Confirmed participants will receive directions to the Antioch Marina and other instructions.

Yosemite's Birdlife

Friday – Sunday, May 31 – June 2

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,
davequady@att.net

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in late May and early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of birdlife, typically including 7 flycatchers (3 Empidonax), 3 vireos, 7 warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader. Sign-ups begin at noon on November 13—by e-mail only—to davequady@att.net.

Past participants have found it convenient to camp at Hodgdon Meadow in the park (reservation period opens January 15, and the campground fills up very fast), or to stay in campgrounds or commercial lodgings outside the park's Big Oak Flat entrance. Details, including meeting times and locations and lodging suggestions, will be provided to confirmed participants. Carpooling is encouraged. Participants should pack warm clothes, rainwear, and waterproof boots for wet meadows. Bring lunches for Saturday and Sunday, and be prepared to walk about 3 miles each day.

Classes

Birding by Ear

Denise Wight's class, held at the Albany Adult School in the East Bay, starts in January. Go to www.blkittiwake.com for details.

Birds of the Bay Area

Rusty Scaife, RScaife@sonic.net, Bob Lewis, Bob@wingbeats.org

Wednesdays, January 9 – February 13, 7:15 – 8:45 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday field trips to be announced (January 12 – February 3 and February 16 – 17) and one weekend field trip, February 9 – 10

Winter in our area is a time for shorebirds, raptors, ducks, geese, and winter resident songbirds. Join an enthusiastic group of birders to hone your identification skills, learn more about bird behaviors, and visit bird-rich areas in Northern California. Our weekend trip will go to Panoche Valley and the Merced area refuges, where we have seen thousands of geese, cranes and ducks—truly a bird extravaganza! The class will be held at the Ed Roberts Campus at Ashby BART, 3075 Adeline Street, Berkeley. Fee: \$105 for GGAS members, \$125 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). To sign up, call the GGAS office at 510.842.2222.

North American Owls

Dave Quady, davequady@att.net

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, February 5 and 6, 12 and 13, 7 – 9 p.m., plus three weekend afternoon and/or evening field trips in February and March (dates and times to be determined)

Learn what makes owls different from other birds and how to identify them by sight and sound, and gain an understanding of their habits and habitats. Classes, held at the GGAS office, will be illustrated with slides and with sounds of these birds of the night. Field trips will visit local owl habitats. Dave Quady, a frequent GGAS field trip leader, is author of the owls section of National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America*. Class size is limited to 20. Fee: \$80 for GGAS members, \$100 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). Sign up beginning at noon on Monday, January 7, by calling 510.843.2222.

"Duck, Duck, Goose...Loon?"

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com, www.naturetrip.com

**Saturday, November 24, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., plus two field trips,
Sunday, November 25, 9 a.m. – noon, and Sunday, December 2, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Millions of ducks, geese, and swans wing their way from their breeding grounds to spend the winter in California. In this new class, we'll focus on identifying the nearly 30 species in the order Anseriformes that reside or overwinter in California and discuss the evolutionary adaptations and life histories that distinguish these species from birds with similar aquatic lifestyles such as loons and grebes. Anyone curious to know more about this wonderful order of birds will enjoy this class.

Cosponsored by Literacy for Environmental Justice, the class will be held at the new EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park in San Francisco. The November 25 field trip will be in San Francisco. Destination of the December 2 trip is the Cosumnes River Preserve in the Sacramento Delta. Inclement weather postpones field trips; rain date for the first trip is December 1. Carpooling will be coordinated at the November 24 class. Heron's Head Park is along the waterfront at the east end of Cargo Way off Third Street. A parking lot is close to the center. Public transportation is available.

Class size is limited to 20. Fee: \$60 for GGAS members, \$75 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). To sign up, call the GGAS office, 510.843.2222.



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Travel with Golden Gate Audubon in the New Year

For the per-person cost of each trip, go to Field Trips on the GGAS website. Contact coordinator Pat Kirkpatrick, patkirkpatrick14@gmail.com, or Alexis Hummel, at avargas542@aol.com, for complete itineraries and registration forms for the Texas, Puget Sound, and Oregon trips. For the Wisconsin and Alaska trips, contact Rich Cimino, yellowbilledtours@gmail.com or 925.353.0266.

SOUTH TEXAS WILDERNESS

This trip, led by Naturalist Journeys, February 26–March 6, begins in Alamo with birding at Llano Grande State Park, followed by a welcome dinner with guide Bob Behrstock. The group will then visit refuges, parks, and various spots along the Rio Grande. Highlights include a visit to King Ranch in Rockport to look for Vermilion Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, and Green Jay, and a boat tour in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to search for Whooping Crane and Roseate Spoonbill.

WINTER BIRDS IN PUGET SOUND

Harry Fuller's March 6–10 trip begins by seeking Northern Shrike, White-winged Scoter, Bald Eagle, Red-necked Grebe, and Harlequin Duck. Additional destinations include Sequim, Port Townsend, and Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge for Rhinoceros Auklet and other alcids, Trumpeter Swan, Black Scoter, and possibly Yellow-billed Loon. Participants also take a ferry to the Skagit River delta, where Rough-legged Hawks and other wintering raptors are abundant.

SPRING MIGRATION IN WISCONSIN

Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours leads two tours, May 5–11 and May 12–18, to the Mississippi Flyway during peak migration. Each trip also provides a glimpse of conservation history through visits to John Muir's boyhood home in Montello, Aldo Leopold's home in the Baraboo Mountains, and the International Crane Foundation.

BREEDING BIRDS OF NOME ALASKA

Rich Cimino leads five trips, starting May 28, June 1, June 5, June 9, and June 13. Each includes an initial evening of introductions and a preview of target species, followed by four days of observing birds in their resplendent breeding plumages. The tour covers prime areas to look for regularly occurring species and for accidental Asian species.

SUMMER IN THE OREGON MOUNTAINS

Harry Fuller's June 21–24 trip concentrates on the Siskiyou and Cascade ranges near Ashland and on the Klamath Basin. Birds of the high-elevation habitats include Calliope Hummingbird, White-headed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Quail, Sooty Grouse, and Ruffed Grouse. In the Cascades, the group will seek out Great Gray Owl. Klamath Basin offers Black Tern, breeding Eared Grebes, and courting Western Grebes.

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from May 27, 2012, to September 28, 2012.

Christine and Gary Bard, Jean M. Conner, Alan Harper, Bob Lewis, Mary Price, Jay and Lisa Pierrepont

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Looking for Holiday Gift Ideas?

We have the solution: the Golden Gate Audubon Gift Certificate. You can purchase a certificate in any denomination. The recipient of your generosity can apply the amount on the certificate to our classes and trips and to any item in our Nature Store. Here are just some of the choices.

- Winter classes start soon, including Dave Quady's popular owl class and a new offering on ducks and geese taught by Eddie Bartley (see page 8).
- Our travel program (opposite) is gearing up for the new year with an exciting array of trips, some to nearby birding hotspots, others to faraway dream destinations.
- The Nature Store has all the top field guides and stocks a range of books of interest to birders. On the shelves are the Sibley field guides and the indispensable breeding atlases for Alameda and Contra Costa counties, plus new books like John Murr-

Law's popular *The Law's Guide to Dressing Bird*. We also have books for children, including *Beak*—a charming and informative title by award-winning author Sued B. Collard III.

- Now that wintering birds are here, it's time to put out a feeder, keep seeds on hand, and sit back for some backyard birding. The store has a variety of feeders and stocks a steady supply of bagged seeds.

As you do your holiday shopping, it's easy to stop by our Berkeley office and get a gift certificate on the spot. You can also peruse the items in the Nature Store for other gift ideas. Or perhaps the perfect present is a gift membership (see back cover), which guarantees discounts on classes and on trips like our February 16 exploration of the Sacramento Delta (see page 8). If you haven't visited recently, you'll see the colorful new mural on our office door, by Berkeley artist +Stefan+, featuring owls, terns, and other Bay Area birds.

CHRISTMAS COUNT from page 1

made the results of all CBCs since 1900 accessible to everyone at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html. Researchers and bird-watchers alike can use the data to help study changes in resident bird populations.

San Francisco's count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge, all of San Francisco, and the peninsula down to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of San Francisco International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the San Francisco count generally tops 160 species.

Oakland's count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to San Pablo Reservoir in Contra Costa County and south to St. Mary's College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically records more than 170 bird species. Both counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in terms of numbers of species found.

"We rely on our veteran CBC participants," says Bob, "but we also welcome rookies. You can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if you look for owls, as some of us do. We'll do our best to assign you to an area that suits your interests and

abilities, and place you with your friends if you request that. Wherever you're assigned, you'll work with an experienced area leader. If your time is limited, you can still help by spending a few hours looking for birds around your workplace or in a nearby park. We want yard watchers, too. Some species, such as Pine Siskin, are often found mostly at feeders."

Both counts end the day with a festive group dinner. Everyone is invited—field counters, yard watchers, and anyone else who wants to join the fun. "The dinner is a great event in its own right. There's lots of good food, it's affordable, and it's a great way to conclude the day. People tell about their day in the field, hear from the other count areas, and figure out how many species we recorded. We also learn what rare birds were

found, like last year's Clay-colored Sparrow in Oakland, and where," says Bob.

GGAS Office Manager John Trubina and volunteer Carol Handelman, who are coordinating the East Bay and San Francisco dinner volunteers, respectively, promise a warm meal, including dessert, so that you can go home full of good food as well as memories of a good day of birding. "Even if you're unable to participate in a count," John says, "come and join us at the dinner to visit with the counters and hear the results."

Volunteers willing to help decorate, set up, serve, and clean up at dinners are greatly appreciated. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Noreen Weeden, 510.301.0570 or nweeden@goldengateaudubon.org, if you can volunteer.

Are You Ready to Count?

If so, act now! Go to www.goldengateaudubon.org, then scroll down below the Get Involved banner and click on the Christmas Bird Count link to sign up. Sign-up deadline for the Oakland count is November 25; for the San Francisco count, it's December 9. For further information on the Oakland count, please call Dave Quady, 510.704.9353, or Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001; for the San Francisco count, e-mail sfbirdcount@yahoo.com. Call the GGAS office, 510.843.2222, if you need help signing up or want more information.

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